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Witty and Witless

The Tudor Facsimile Texts

(Folio Series)

[Witty and Witless]

By JOHN HEYWOOD

Probable period of handwriting, 15 [?]
Now first reproduced in Facsimile, 1909

[Vol. 46]

The Tudor Facsimile Texts

(Folio Series)

Under the Supervision and Editorship of
JOHN S. FARMER

[Witty and Witless]

By JOHN HEYWOOD

[*c.* 15 ?]

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Witty and Witless

The manuscript now reproduced in facsimile is a fragment, but little can have been lost beyond the introduction. The original is now in the British Museum (Press-mark Harl. 367), *and is described in Wanley's Catalogue as "a book in folio wherein are contained many letters and fragments, with various poems, written by the hands of Mr. John Stowe and others; now bound up together." The present interlude or "disputation" is the forty-first item in the volume, folios* 110–119, *and is thus catalogued: "John Heywood's Poetical Dialogue concerning Witty* (i.e. *Wise*) *and Witless: made, as it seems to be recited before K. Henry VIII." Mr. Collier named it "Wit and Folly," and under this title it was for the first time printed by the Percy Society in* 1846.

The manuscript has hitherto been accepted without doubt as in the author's handwriting, and to be the only example that has come down to us. This, however, was queried by me, and a request for further close examination has, after the above was in type, resulted in the following letter, which may be regarded as satisfactory, and in every way justifying the doubt I raised.

British Museum,
London, W.C.,
8th Dec. 1908.

Dear Mr. Farmer,

Further careful inspection of the John Heywood MS. (Harl. 367, *ff.* 110–119), *and comparison of it with dated MSS., and consultation with my colleagues (and especially with my chief, Dr. Warner, than whom I know no better judge), have led me to modify the opinion I expressed to you yesterday.*

The MS. is unquestionably of the XVIth cent.; and I see no impossibility of its falling within the reign of Edw. VI., or even as early as the closing years of Hen. VIII.'s reign. And the natural interpretation of the colophon would be, of course, to take it as indicating that the MS. was actually written by Heywood himself (though obviously not his original draft, from the paucity of corrections, and from the note on f. 118*b cancelling the three stanzas "in the Kings Absens"). The Museum possesses no other autograph of his, so far as I know.*

The same water-mark occurs in Royal MS. 7 *B iv., Cranmer's draft of the Prayer-Book,* 1543–7.

Yours truly,

J. A. HERBERT.

Until recently little that was definite was known concerning John Heywood, who by many authorities was writ down as a kind of Court fool of

the same stamp as Will Somers. Recent research and discovery, however, has thrown considerable light on the uncertainty surrounding the personal life of John Heywood, and the materials for a more accurate biography are in course of collection and preparation. It will then be seen that there has been considerable misapprehension concerning Heywood's capacity and social status, and that to place him in any respect on the same footing as Will Somers is as wide of the mark as it would be to place the late Mr. Dan Leno on a level with Sir W. S. Gilbert.

Mr. J. A. Herbert, of the Manuscript Department, British Museum, after comparing this facsimile with the original, reports that "the reproduction is excellently done. I have rarely seen anything better."

JOHN S. FARMER.

[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

James

Better or worse? say the [illegible]
better yet for [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]

John James

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
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[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

John

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Some lasche hym some lowte hym
Some whiske hym some whyppe hym
Whyche
Wythe scharpe naylys some nyppe hym
Not ewyn maister somer the kyngs grecys foole
But tastythe some tyme some nyps of new schoole
And by syde this kynde of frettyng & fewnyng
A nother kynd of turment in consewnyng
The wytty to the wyttles of invent
After invention of yerfull entent
The fool by flatery to turment ys browght
So farre over joyde and his brayne so wyde wrowght
That by joy of a jewell skant wurthe a myght
The sott of slepythe no wynke in a whole nyght
And for ensampyll wythe a walsyngam ryng
This distemperans to the sot ye may bryng
And make hym joy therynn as hyt ware a thyng
Of pryce to peyse the rownsome of a kyng
In joying wherof yf ony man got way
To get yt from hym as every chylde may
Then many chylde sethe the sot in such case
That nowght but paynfull sorow takythe ony place
By this small prosses a small wytt may ges
That wyde were the wytty to wyshe them wyttles

James

The effect of this yowr matter as ye spake yt
Standyth much yn two poynts as I take yt
Of which tweyne the tone ys that the sot hath
By jollyng & jobbyng and other lyke skathe
Extreme payne wythe extremyte of yer
Thother ys aster frettyng fewryns fyer
That the foole wt eche frewtles tryflyng toy
Ys so distempryd wt distemperat joy
That as much payne bryngt his plesaunt passhyon
As doth the pynchyng of his most paynfull fashyon
Thes two poynts consideryd the sot as ye saye

BRITISH MUSEUM

Hathe some payne sometyme but most tymes I say nay

Then from no payne to some payne the wyttles are brought

Yes but wytty and wyttles wyttly wrought
By some payne to such payne that wytty fele most
Then wytty and wyttles eche parte his parte bost
Take of wytty the degrees and nombyr all
And of pe nombyr I thynke pe nombyr small
But that eche one of them ys of nede a synde
To labor sore yn body or elles yn mynde
And fele to all that fortune so doth favor
But yn body pe mynde both they do labor
And of body thes labors the most paynefullest
Ys the labor of mynde I have harde gest
And lest both paynes or most of twaynes be to tought
For you to match wt and the list payne nought
To the first ~~payne~~ most payne of pe wyttles nody
Joyne we the wyttyse least payne payne of body
Who seth what payne labor bodyly bryngth
Shall easely se therby how the body wryngth
Husbondmens plowyng or earyng and sowyng
Hedgyng and dychyng wrepyng and mowyng
In cartyng such lystyng such burdenns bareyng
That payne of the body bryngth ~~thyse~~ thyse to stareyng
And much of this done yn tyme of such hete
That yn colde cave covryd the carcas must swete
Some other use crafts hu wt wurke ys so small
That yn somer plesamntly they lyve all
Who in wynter when husbondmen warme wt warke
In that they may ~~not~~ not sturr for colde or evyn starke
Some yn wynter tryse some yn somer fry
And the wyttles doth nother for comenly
Other whyte wurschyffull or honorabull
He temprately standth in house at the tabull
And of all his labors rekyn the hole rabyll
Rygger burden barth ~~he~~ none then his babyll
So that from thes paynes or the lyke recyty
The wyttles hath warrant to be a quyghty

And sewr the sotts pleasewre in this last aquyghtall
Counterwaylth his payne in yowr first reyghtall
For unto the sotts nyppyng and beatyng
Joyne the wytty laborers nyppes and freatyng
And whether ye cownt by yere mouthe or weke
Ye shall fynde thase of the wytty to seeke
As far as of the wyttles and of bothe sorts
This is the differens that tome ymports
Sotts are coylde of other / the wytty coylthe hym self
What choyse thus a leagyd

John

Small / ah horson elf
Some what he towchyth me now yn very deed
How ~~[illegible]~~ beyt to thys am not / yet full agreed
The wytty who beate them selves by bysynes
May oste yn beatyngs fawowr them selves yges
Such oportunyte by wytt ys oste espyde
~~In takyng tyme or place as best may stand~~
That labor by wytt ys oste qualyfyd
In takyng tyme or place as best may stand
Most easelye to dyspatche thyngs cunyng in hand
Wytt hathe provytyon alwaye for releef
To provyde some remedy against mystheef
Wytty take bysynes as wytty wyll make yt
And as wytty beate wyttles / wyttles must take yt

James

Take yt how ye lyst ye can make yt no les
But wytty have suche payne as my wordes wyttnes
For thowgh wytt for tyme sometyme may payne prevent
Yet yn most tymes theyre foresyde payne ys present
Which payne in the wytty wyttyly weyde
May matche payne of the wyttles by yo first leyde
And to the ~~[illegible]~~ second poynte / for dyscemporate joyes
By havyng or hopyng of fancyes or toyes
In wyttles or wytty bothe take / as one
For thowgh the thyngs that wytty have or hope on
Are yn some kynde of a cownt thyngs much gretter
Then thyngs of the sotts joyings yet nowhyt better
Nor les payne bryngth the passyon / but endyferent
To bothe / except wytty have the woors turment
Thyng yrow a right good wytty havyng clerely

A thousand pound sodaynly gyvyn hym verely
Who before that owre myght dysp end no peny
Nor tyll that owre never lokyd for eny
Myght not joy as much p soden receyvyng
As joyth the sott resyt of his walsyngam ryng
And therby be kepte from quyet sleepe a weke
As well as the ryng maketh the sotte sleepe to seeke
And in a soden leesyng that gyste agayne
Myght not the wytt be presyd wt payne
As depe as the wyttles his ring stolne or lost
And though thys ensampyll chanse seelde whenyat most
Yet sometyme yt happyth and dayly we see
That folk fare from wyttles passhynyd be
By joyfull hope of thyngs to them ~~[illegible]~~ lyk to hape
Or fatyng of thyngs plesaunt late lyght in the lap
As much to theyre wurst for dystempraunce
As ye showde the wyttles restles formerly
And of tyme for cause considryd and ~~[illegible]~~ weyde
As lyght as your walsyngam ryng afor leyde
Wytt in wytti hath seelyd such perfecshyon
To bryng dysposyshyn fulle in abnecksyon
And the differes of dysposyshyn ys such
Some wytts hope to lyttyll some wytts hope to much
By which over much I sey and sey must ye
That wytti and wyttles one in this case be
And thus in both casys reasonyng cause showth
Cause to ~~[illegible]~~ conclewde that to the wytti growth
As much payne as to the wyttles wherby
As good ~~[illegible]~~ be wyttles as wytti say ye — Jochn

That conclewcyon ys conclewedyd wyseli
Your pryme proposycyon dyd put presyseli
Better to be wyttles then wytti and now
As good to be wyttles as wytti sey you
But that ~~[illegible]~~ wytt ~~[illegible]~~ which putth case in degre comparatyve
And conclewdyth case in degre posytyve
Call not in that case clame degre sowperlatyve — James

Ye pas in this tawnt your prerogatyve
But that wytt which bostyth ye fulle of his wynnyng
As thoughtt he knewe thende of thing at begynnyng
That wytt schall show wyttles ympedymet
To be taken wytti wt wytts excelent
I conclewde her not for thende but for the mynds

[illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] shall [illegible] and also [illegible]
To graunt me than to [illegible] my that I entende
your fall by [illegible] [illegible] to be [illegible] more [illegible]
To [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
And so be a [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible]
To [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible]
The where [illegible] graunt fully for [illegible] your [illegible] make
That as much payne with as [illegible] [illegible]
To [illegible] the mynde to the end I shall prove
That most payne of [illegible] to the [illegible] [illegible]
The all [illegible] equally [illegible] of [illegible]
To [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
More [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] payne of mynde
In matter as playne as [illegible] be a [illegible]
Which payne of mynde is more [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible]
[illegible] more [illegible] [illegible] payne of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Jostogy

[illegible] so. and [illegible] so but so [illegible] not [illegible]
Nor [illegible] yet but that [illegible] [illegible]
And with [illegible] prove [illegible] [illegible] more playnely
I will [illegible] to [illegible] the contrary
I think payne of body [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
May [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of payne of mynde

Jamys

[illegible] [illegible] assuredly think as [illegible] [illegible]
I think [illegible] think as [illegible] [illegible] but [illegible]
[illegible] that [illegible] but [illegible] [illegible]
To [illegible] [illegible] purpose presently [illegible]
Yet that [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
For [illegible] [illegible] that as [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] other principall [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] concluded in the part that I [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] as [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] as may be [illegible]
The means labour to the means [illegible] [illegible]
And [illegible] shall [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] payne
More [illegible] [illegible] the labourers labor playne

Jorgy

The [illegible] payne [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

James

The [illegible] labourers labor [illegible] that at [illegible] [illegible]

Ye felynge the frewte hys wurkmanshyp
as much delight carters ost. in carts neate trymd
as do studyents yn bokes. wythe golde neate lymd
And as much envy who may drive hys cart best
as a mong stewdyents who may some lernd hyest
wherby inwarde delyght to tolle forthe ech part
Seinthe me yndifrent. to art. or to cart
And furder meane labor in most comon wyse
ys most part hansome and holsome exercyse
That purgyth hewmors to mans lyfe and quyckness
~~Also most kinde~~
Whyche studye bredyth to mans dethe or syckness
Also most kynde of labor most comenly
Strene most grose outwarde partye of the body
Where studye sparyng sholders fyngers and tose
To the hedde and hart dyrectly studye gose
~~perde~~ perwert is yowr jugment yf ye indye not playne
That les ys the parell and les ys the payne
The knockyng of knockylls wyche fyngers dethe strayne
Then dyggyng yn the hart. or drying of the brayne

Thoy

For comun meane kynde in bothe parts now ~~[illegible]~~ leyde
Is se not but reason saythe. as ye have seyde

James

The labor of body and mynde. thus compar
In what degrese. ye can devyse to declare
Betwene bothe beyng not knyt yn suche degre
But that thone from thother seperate may be
And that bothe labors yn joynyng ye a rect
as lyfe yn degre. as wytt may coniect
And bothe ons serchyd serche shall make warantyse
yn labor of mynde the wurst payne dethe arise

Joy

Methynkthe I cowlde make yt otherwyse a pere
Save I lacke tyme to dylayne matter here
For tyme of reasonyng wolde be long therin
And tyme of reasonyng must be short here in
Whyche weyde w that this standthe ~~this standthe~~ but insydently
To owr present porpose pryncipally
I grannt to a gre. as ye have defynde
Of labor of body and labor of mynde
That labor or payne of mynde ys the greter
And thys nowe grawntyd what be ye the better

James

So muche the better and yow so muche the wurs
That ye may now put yowr toong in yowr purs
For any word indefens yowr toong shall tell

After thes my next woordes give eare and ~~mal~~ marke well
This labor of mynde whyche we nowe agre
Above labor of body we wust decre
To joyne sole to the wytty for possybly
Cannot the wyttles take part of that payne — John

Why — James

How can he have payne by imaginacyon
That lackythe all kynds of consyderacyon
And yn all sensys ye so yn sofycyent
That nowght can he think in owght sr may be ment
By ony meane to devyce ony selfe thinge
Nor devyse in thyng past present or cummynge
No more hath he in mynde other payne or care
Then hath other cocke my hors or gyll my mare
This cause wt wyttles payne of mynde dyspensys
But the wytty havynge all vytall sensys
Hath therby and inwarde clocke whyche marke who wylle
May oftymes go false but yt never ~~[illegible]~~ standythe styll
The plummets of that clocke come never to grownde
Imaginacyon ys watche and gothe so rownde
To whyche consyderacyon gyvythe so quycke eare
That in the wytty mynde sr restles rest ys there
A small wytte may ges no wone wytte can deme
How many or how muche are there paynes extreme
Nor how many contrary kyndes in some one brest
Yf ye perceyve this tale ye se yt wytnest
Thre thyngs of whyche the fyrst ys that the wyttles
Off labor or payne of mynde have reles
The secunde ys that the wytty have in vre
All paynes of mynde and sr wytty doth sr sr ~~[illegible]~~ proceder
Thyrdly I glauset at payne of mynde a lewdynge
That payne to be most payne as in for conclewdynge
Perceyve ye this — John

Ye and grawnt yt trew to — James

Then must ye grawnt wytty to have most payne — John

So I do — James

Yf wytty have most payne of tweyne ye must say
Better to be wyttles then wytty — John

Nay — James

I say yes — John

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] God [illegible] no [illegible] God [illegible] none drowne
[illegible] [illegible] of a [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] amount
[illegible] no more [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] at [illegible] the [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Joh

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

James

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Joh

Now so

James

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
But [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Joh

James

Yes

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

My pleasures in the wytty to hold me vagge
And pleasures of the wyttles to ever whelme
I stainyng in ye hym stack so to the helme
That ye his part finally to shyp wrack ys brought
The sewrte of all pleasures in this worlde wrought
Match not the sewrt of pleasure eternall
And the state of sotts have none acount so carnall
That god ympowthe any ill to them I say
And the wyttyse acount augmenthe every day
And thawdytors wytt who shall take thacount so clere
He forgeth not wone worde in a thousand yere
What nede mo woordes I thynk the lad wytt here
Sethe thes thre casys on my syde so aper
That in the two first casys temporally
And in this thyrde and last case spyritewally
Ys seue fully I may conclewde finally
Better to be wyttles then to be wytty

John

So sey I now to by our blissyd lady
I gyve uppe my part and take yor part playnly
Off wytty and wyttles I wyste now rather
That my chyld may have a foole to hys father
The pyth of your conclewsyons be all so pewre
That better be a foole then a wyse man sewre

Jerome

Not so all thowgh your fancy do so surmyse
Not better for man to be wytles then wyse
Nor so good to be wyttles as wytty nother
Thus ys your wytt disseyvyd in other

John

Why what differens betwene wyse and wytty

Jerome

As much sometime as betwene wysdom and folly

John

Man can in nowyse be wyse wt oute wytt

Jerome

No, and man may have gret wytt and wysdom nowhyt
wytt ys the wurker of all perseyvyng
And indyferent to good or ill wurkyng
And as much wytt may be in thyngs of most ill
As in the best thyngs wytt can aspyre untill
In vertu or vyse I meane; and wytt hath receyght
Off none ill where wytt uppon wysdom doth weyght

wysdome governeth wytt alway vertu to use
and all kynds of vyc alway to refewse
Thus ys wysdom in good part takyn alweyse
and gydyth wytt in all thyngs beyng thyngs of preyse
Thus though ye must (as ye nede not) graunt hi grownd
which ys better wyttles then wytty to be fownd
yet as much as wysdom above wytt showt
so much grawntyd ye hym more then of nede growth — James

This ys some young schoolman a fresh ~~[illegible]~~ comonar
harde ye the pryncypall that plantyd this jar — Jerome

I harde all — James

And ~~[illegible]~~ not all on my syde fall — Jerome

No, yf ye had resonyd as I shall — James

Yf ye as ye say have hard all her sayd
and pr ye that sayng have so wyddly wayd
To way my part wurth herein in conclusyon
Then ar ye wyttles pr we towe talkt on
But babyll ys wyll thyo wyll I bide upon
Better be sott somer then sage salomon — Jerome

Gove ye sentens or ye her what I caye say
Loo how wyll caryth hym and his wytt away — John

Syr yf ye hard all, in my part how say ye
what dyd I graunt hym to farr show I pr ye — Jerome

All that ye grawntyd wolnye — John

Nay I trow — Jerome

Ye shall when we have done not trow but know
for entre wherto I pr ye answer me
A question or twayne or mo yf nede be
and fyrst unto thys answer as ye can
whether wold ye be a resonable man
or any unresonabyll beast — John

By and sell
I wolde be the symplest man betwene hevyn and hell
rather then the best beast pr ever was bred — Jerome

Then yf ye of one of the twayne must be spe
ye wolde be a maltman ye a myller
rather then a mylhorse — John

Be ye my well willer.

Jerome
John

Speke no more of this then what may fye
I wold not be a beast for all this worlde
Where yt for nought ells but for this life present

Jerome

The time of this life in dede I meane and ment
But tell me why by yor faythe ayn playnely
Ye wil not change estate with mill horse

John

Why there be whyse and wherfore I thynk a thousand
In count of two kynds of thynges cunnyng in hande
Sensibill pleasure and sensibill payne
And first for payne sustaynyd in thes twayne
Begyn with the mill hors whom ye put for prefe
Or any lyke beast sustaynyng the lyke grefe
And or I wold take the payne the poore beast take
I wold eche day be twyghe and tyd to a stake
Carying fro the mill carying to the mill
Drawing in the mill poor jade he jeth still
Ambill he trot he go he a foot pase
Walope he galope he rack he in trase
Yf his pase pleasant be yt soste or faster
The spurs or whypp shalbe his pay master
Wher not a man trow ye in plesaunt case
Wer a beast in this case to change case or place
No man except some few so unfortunate
That they be out of thacount of mans estate
That wolde agre to leve to change paynes I trow
With beasts payne beyng such as all men kn do
Now to speke of plesewre in thes twayne asynde
The beast to [illegible] copare yt to fare behynde
Plesewre [illegible] to the fall
The beast in effect [illegible] nome the man [illegible]
The resonabill manns I magynashyon
Joynd wt resonabill consideracyon
Bryngthe man muche plesewre in considerynge
The plesant proport of eche plesaunt thynge
Possesyd to mans behofe at comandynge
Beasts have thynge of nede but no [illegible] pleasynge
Syns man hathe relefe for all nesessite
As well as beast and above beast comodyte
Of plesewre plantyd for mans recreatyon
In the hyest kynd to mans contentatyon

Wherby plesowre in effect betwene thes twayne
Showthe thus man hath all beast hathe none & more payne
Hathe beast the then resonabyll man by thes bothe
Change fro man to beast who wyll I wolde be lothe — Jerome

Ye have yn my mynde thys & right well desynde
And for cause kepe yt well a while yn yowr mynde
Set we a syde man and beasts symylytowde
And full dysposyton in bothe se we vewde
What thyng dysposyth most the varyet
Betwene man and beast — John

Reson in man perde — Jerome

That man who of reason ys as destytute
As a beast ys what dyffrens shall we dyspewte — John

Small in this case excepte yt be this one
The sott hathe a resonabyll soule beasts have none — Jerome

What helpyth the wytt of the soule in the sott
Syns the body ys such yt wythe yt not
Where ympotensy plantho such ympedyments
That use of senses are voyde to all yntents
For use of reason so that for use of wytt
They are as beasts wyttles usyng wytt nowhyt
In man thus wytles and thus resonabyll beaste
I se small dyffrens for thys lyfe at leaste — John

I grawnt the wyttles and the beast thus as one — Jerome

Then shall thes beasts wyttles man and mylhors draw on
Both yn one yoke for thynk you the nomber
Standthe as somer dothe all day yn slomber
May somer ys a sot soole for a kyng
But sots in mayny other mens howsyng
Bear water bear wodde and do yn dongery
In kychyn cole house & in the norsery
And dayly for fawtes whyche they cannot refrayne
Evyn lyke the mylhors they be whyppyd amayne
Other fooles that labor not have other conseyts
Uppon thydyll foole the flock ever more weytes
They tos hym / they turne hym he is jobd & jolde
Whyth fretting and fewmyng as ye a fore tolde
Except mayster somer of sotts not the best
But the mylhors may compare wt hym for rest
The for plesowre conceyvyng or & receyvyng
The wyttles and mylhors are both as one thyng

Your last tale and this tale together conferd
by matter of both let yo answer be hard
whether ye wolde be a man resonabyll
Or unresonabyll and except ye fabyll
This answer shall show playne & undoubtydly
whether ye wolde be wyttles or wytty

By good faith I take this conclusion so full — John
that I may geve over and avyn so I wult
for this life

Well then for the life to come — Jerome
few woords where reason ys may kept up the summ
Concerning pleasure after this life present
By which he and you dissolvyd argument
both parts by both partyse were so endyd
that yo part fult faynthly ye defendyd
Though the mere merite of our redemtyon
stande in cristys passyon yet in excensyon
therof shall we stand by gods justice except
havyng tyme and wytty his comandments be kept
And who in which doth most dylygently
plant ymps of good woorks gyvyn by god chefly
most hyly of god shall he have rewarde

How prove ye that — John

By scripture have in regarde — Jerome
Cryst in the gospell of John doth this declare
In the house of my father saith crist there are
Divers and mayny mantyons that ys to say
As the exposytyon of saynt Awstyne doth way
There are in ~~the~~ hevyn divers degrees of glory
To be ~~[illegible]~~ receyvyd of men accordyngly
Eche man as he usyth gods gysts of grace
So shall he have in hevyn his degree or place
but mark this chef grownd the summ of scripture sayth
We must walk in thes gysts in the path of faith
In which walk who wurkthe most in gods comandment
He shall have most ~~[illegible]~~ seynt poule showth like entent
As one starre differthe from an other in schyning
So the resurrection of the ded which like thyng
Aperth in other placys of scripture

I grawnt and wfar than — John
Jerome

That what cunnth speyght in vrd
Syns he that vsyth gods gifts best shall have best
And he next who dothe next and so forth the rest
And that the witt do dayly wurk or may
And the wittles nowght wurkythe by no way
So that hys rewarde may compare in degre
Yf wyty have this advantage thynkythe me
The wyse wittise place wysche I desyrusly
Rather then place of the wittles — John

So do I
Yff wysche wolde wyn yt but where sot ys sewre
The witty standthe in hasardous adventure
To lees all and so in fyne fayre and well
Instead of way to hevyn to take the ways to hell
In wurkes comandyd who in faythe walkthe not
By gods Justyce he hathe dannatyon in lott
And what other folks fele I can not tell
But suche frayle falls fele I in my selfe to dwell
And by them to lees hevyn I am so a drad
The sotts sewrte of least Joy there wolde god I hadde
An olde proverb makthe wt this which I take good
Better one byrd in hand then ~~[illegible]~~ ten in the wood — Jerome

What yf of the ten byrds in the wood eche one
Were as good as that one in yor hand alone
And that ye might cachthem all ten yf ye wolde
Wolde ye not leve one byrde for the ten now tolde — John

Yes — Jerome

Wolde ye not havynge helpe take resonabyll payne
For thencres of ten byrds for one in gayne — John

Yes — Jerome

Then in gods name fear not let fle this one
Ye shall I trust catche thes ten byrds every chone
Your fleshly frayle falls are suche sr ye drede
As muche as hope in havynge hevynly mede
By which ~~[illegible]~~ dred sewrte of Joyes there sr most smalle
Wysche ye rather then bide venture to have Joyes all
And the sonner by this ye chose this I deme
The least Joy there ys more then man can esteme

But now to remove this ~~[illegible]~~ blocke yt gett drede
We have a lever that removethe drede wt speed
God sofether but not wylthe ony man to spye
Nor god wylthe no synners dethe but he be yn
Such endles males yt his finall estate
In lack of penytens make hym selfe reprobate
In time of this life at eche penytent call
Our marcyfull maker remythe synns all
From the perpetuall peyne infernall
What ever they be from least to most carnall
By which goodnes of god we are set in hopes chayer
Not to brede presumpsyon but to banysche dyspayre
The grace of god alwey to grace alewrthe man
And when man wyll call for grace of grace a sewrthe man
To assyst man gods comandments to fulfyll
At all times yf man cast owte yll wyllyng wyll
Nowe syns the cristyane that wurkythe most in faythe
Shall have most in rewarde as the scrypture saythe
And yt gods grace by grace cald for wyll assyst
Mans wyll to wurke well alwey when man lyst
And at instant of dew ordrydd penytens
Man hathe gods mercy of all former offens
Which showthe for mercy man ys not more gredy
To ax then god to grawnt mercy ys redy
This sene what show you to mayntayne the feare
Which ye towarde desperatyon were in whyle eare

John

What showthe nay the show of that frare ys extynkt
Evyn by this prati tale thus pythyly lynkt
Syns god yo to the most faythfull wurker gevythe most
And to make man wurke muche god hasthe as in post
And wher man hath not wrowght at contrycyon
God grawnthe man of damnatyon remycyon
Making man sowre of frewte of cristys passyon
Except mans wylfull wyll mar all good fascyon
By this drede god as ~~[illegible]~~ standthe wt love & hope
But no desperate drede dothe my hart now grope

Jerome

Ten byrds in the wood or one in hande alone
Which chose ye now

John

Johan

I will not change ten for one
Syns the byrder wyl helpe me to take them all
As sewre to myne use as the one byrde cowlde fall — Jerome

Well for conclowsion syns ye sowndly se
That wytti have plesewre here in more degre
Then wytles and also wytti wyse se ye
In hevyn by scrypture in hyer Joyes be
Then the wyttles, you seyng this clerly
Whether wolde ye now be wyttles or wytti — Johan

Wytti, and the more wytti am I for you
Of which hartily I thanke you and now
Where my mate my lords sayde that ys gone
Better be sot somer then sage salamon
Ye for sakyng that I wolde now rather be
Sage salomon then sot somer I assewre ye — Jerome

As ye schow wyt in change of former mynde
Beyng ~~for~~ now from wytles to wytti enclynde
So aply ye wytt in what wytt schall devise
As in good use of wytt by grace ye may rise
To be both wytti and wyttily wyse
In governans of gods gyfts in such syse
As wysdom alwey gydyth wherby ~~this~~ this schall fall
Gods gyfts to gods glory both ye may use and schall

Thes woords of counsell in which I now wadyd
To hym whom I told them I onely assyne
I am by all circumstance full perswadyd
This sort beyng sortyd in sort ~~that~~ thus fyne
Nede none exortation or at least not myne
This sort have not onely by ~~natur~~ natewre his wytt
But also by grace lyke wysdom Joynde to yt

This thre stave next folowyng in the
Kyngs absens are voyde

And as in them therbe gods gyfts schyne most may
so stand ther affayres wherby they so schyne schall
yf the glos of gods schyne not bryght ech way
In them who havyng a realme in governall
set forthe theyr governans to gods glory all
Charytably aydyng subiects in ech kynde
The schynyng of gods gyfts wherby schall we then fynde

And of this hye sort the hy hed most excellent
ys our most loved and drade supreme soferayne
The schynyng of whose most excellent talent
ymployde to gods glory above all the trayne
sins wyt wantyth her recytall to retayne
And that all his faythfull fele of frewte of his fame
Of corse I pray pardon in passyng the same

Prayng that prynes whome our prynes his grete grace gave
To grawnt hym long length of encres in estate
At full fyne wherof his most hy gyfts to have
by his most faythfull use rewarde in such rate
As ys promysyd in scripture alegyd late
The Joyes not all onely in estymabyll
But more the degre of Joyes incomparabyll

Contynewans wherof wt frewtfull encrese
I chartyly wysche for encrese of rewarde
As scripture alegyd late dath wytnes
The wytty wyse wurker to be prefarde
Above thydyll sot and ye to regarde
Ech may hym self so to apply in this
As ye all may obtayne the hye degre of blys

Amen quod Jesus Jesus

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Witty and witless

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